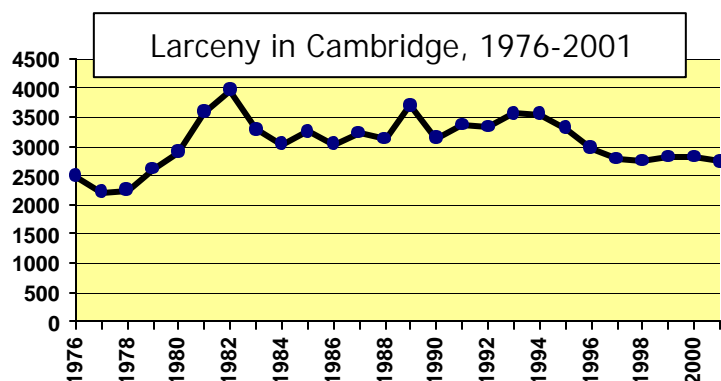


Larceny

2820 in 2000 · 2740 in 2001 · 3% decrease



Larceny is the unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away of property from the possession of another. It includes crimes such as shoplifting, pocket-picking, thefts from motor vehicles, thefts of auto parts and accessories, and bicycle thefts, in which no use of force, violence, fraud, or trespass occurs. In the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, this crime category does not include embezzlement, "con" games, forgery, and worthless checks. Motor vehicle theft is also excluded from this category, as it is a separate crime index offense.

Larceny is the most commonly reported Part I crime, accounting for 62% of the Part I crime total. However, it is probably also one of the most underreported crimes. Many victims of larceny—especially if the dollar amount is low—simply don't bother to call the police when a theft occurs. In addition, high portions of shoplifting incidents are not seen and are thus not reported.

Within the next decade, we can probably expect larceny to continue to increase and to produce the most patterns. Certain items of property—cellular telephones, laptop computers, and other electronics—will drive the larceny rate. These items—easy to steal, easy to conceal, and easy to sell—provide attractive targets for thieves looking for profit without the danger and potential legal penalties inherent in robbery and burglary.

Larceny is broken into nine sub-categories, four of which reported increases in 2001. Most notable is the increase in larcenies of service.

Categorization	2000	2001	% Change
Larcenies from Buildings	610	517	-15%
Larcenies from MVs	653	691	+6%
Larcenies of Bicycles	360	318	-12%
Larcenies from Persons	375	407	+9%
Shoplifting	373	463	+24%
Larcenies of Services	18	29	+61%
Larcenies from Residences	215	175	-19%
Larcenies of License Plates	137	100	-27%
Other (Misc.) Larcenies	79	40	-49%
Total	2820	2740	-3%

Larcenies from Buildings

Larcenies from buildings are non-burglary thefts from commercial establishments. "Non-burglary" means that either the offender had a specific right to be on the premises, or that the building was open to

the general public, and that no force was used to gain entry to the building where the theft was committed.

Larcenies from buildings are further sub-divided into 15 categories:

Type	2001 Total	% Of Total
Company property from offices	88	17%
Personal property from offices	61	12%
Property from School Classrooms	30	6%
Property left on Store Counters	48	9%
Property Unattended in Bars/Restaurants	6	1%
Property Unattended in Misc. Locations	45	9%
Employee Property in Back Rooms of Stores	56	11%
Property "Forgotten" in Restrooms & Other Locations	16	3%
Property Left in Health Club Lockers	49	9%
Property Left in Hotel Rooms	13	3%
Cash Missing from Store Safes	59	11%
Property Stolen from Construction Sites	34	7%
Items such as signs and plants outside of retail establishments	11	2%
Vending Machines	1	0%

About 70% of the larcenies of company property from offices involve the theft of laptop computers. We expect that laptops will continue to be one of the hottest theft targets over the next decade.

Thefts of personal property from offices most often involve the larceny of a wallet or purse from the victim's desk.

A high percentage—at least two-thirds and possibly as high as 80%—of all thefts from buildings can be attributed to employees, security guards, or cleaning

staff—in other words, people who have access to the area from which the item was stolen. The remainder are the work of thieves who sneak into the building during opening, closing, or lunch hours—often posing as delivery personnel.

Most larcenies from buildings are crimes of opportunity, not crimes that a thief deliberately sets out to commit. One exception is larcenies from health club lockers, which is a continual problem at three establishments in the city: Bally's (1815 Mass. Avenue), Wellbridge Health Center (5 Bennett St.), and 820 Mass. Ave. (YMCA). Both locked and unlocked lockers are entered and burglarized for watches, wallets, jewelry, and other property while the owner works out.

Geographic Breakdown of Larcenies from Buildings

Business District	2000	2001	Change
Galleria/East Camb.	117	102	-13%
Kendall Square/MIT	114	61	-47%
Inman Square	40	28	-30%
Central Square	73	95	+30%
Camb.port/Riverside	29	35	+21%
Bay Square/Broadway	42	22	-48%
Harvard Square	73	68	-7%
1500–1900 Mass. Ave.	31	29	-7%
Porter Square	30	23	-23%
Alewife/West Camb.	59	54	-9%

In the mid-to-late 80's, Kendall Square started to develop and attract computer/technology firms at alarming numbers. As more buildings were constructed and more office space was filled, larcenies from buildings began to surge. Laptop computers from offices and construction tools from construction trailers were hot targets. Construction has slowed and so have larcenies from buildings. The Kendall Square business district recorded a 47% decrease this year.

The biggest increase was reported in the Central Square business district. In 1999, Central Square unexpectedly took the lead in larcenies from buildings. In 2000 the numbers declined significantly, but not once again Central Square larcenies from buildings are on the rise. The offices of 99 Bishop Allen Drive reported numerous incidents of wallets being stolen from offices during lunchtime and the YMCA, located at 820 Mass. Avenue, reported several thefts from lockers located in the health club. No other major patterns were reported.

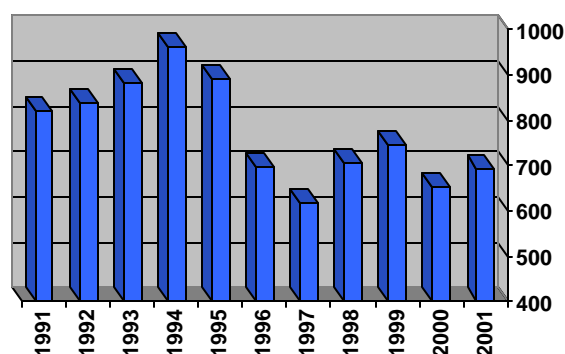
By far, the most larcenies from buildings were reported at the Galleria Mall. In a majority of the incidents, businesses suspected employees or ex-

employees of stealing deposits. Cash deposits that were placed in a safe at closing time would mysteriously disappear sometime between then and the following morning. Other incidents involved cash registers being short large sums of money at closing time.

Larcenies from Motor Vehicles

Larcenies from Motor Vehicles involve an offender either breaking into a car and stealing valuables within or stealing an exterior accessory (such as tires and hubcaps) from an automobile. It is the second most commonly reported crime in Cambridge.

Larceny from Motor Vehicles, 1991-2001



Larcenies from motor vehicles increased slightly this year, although still remain much lower than numbers reported in the early 1990s. Being relatively quick and simple to commit, and yet potentially very rewarding, larceny from a motor vehicle is a favorite crime for the unskilled sector of the criminal workforce. It is committed frequently by homeless and juvenile offenders, often in sprees of five or six incidents a night. In an average year, it is second only to malicious destruction as the most commonly reported crime in Cambridge.

The most popular targets are, in order, car stereos and CD players, cellular telephones, wallets and cash, CDs and tapes, and laptop computers; all easily fenced items.

About 90 percent of larcenies from motor vehicles are accomplished by breaking into the car—usually by smashing a window or by prying the door lock.

Patterns generally occur in commercial areas during the day and in residential areas during the night. Commercial hotspots have traditionally included mall and business area parking lots and garages. Residential hotspots include parking lots at large apartment buildings and complexes.

Geographic Breakdown of Larcenies from Motor Vehicles

Neighborhood	2000	2001	Change
East Cambridge	93	74	-20%
MIT	27	28	+4%
Inman/Harrington	25	38	+52%
Area 4	133	104	-22%
Cambridgeport	88	103	+17%
Mid-Cambridge	56	86	+54%
Riverside	25	35	+40%
Agassiz	19	26	+37%
Peabody	52	62	+19%
West Cambridge	61	33	-46%
North Cambridge	43	76	+77%
Cambridge Highlands	19	14	-26%
Strawberry Hill	12	12	N.C.

The most significant increase in larcenies from motor vehicles was reported in the North Cambridge neighborhood. Patterns at two parking lots in the area contributed to this increase: 362/364 Rindge Avenue and 149 Alewife Brook Parkway.

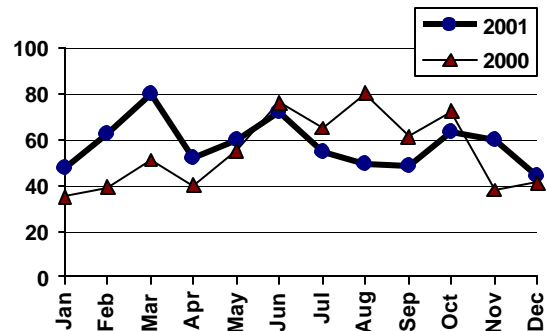
- Breaks at the parking lots of 362/364 Rindge Avenue took place early in the week, between 11:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. Thieves stole the usual targets, i.e. CD players, cell phones, etc., but also stole many items from the cars themselves such as air bags, spare tires, and gear shifts.
- Last year there were no larcenies from motor vehicles reported at the Summer Shack parking lot (149 Alewife Brook Parkway). This year, seven incidents were reported. The breaks typically occurred between Thursdays and Saturdays around 7:00 p.m. Thieves were lured by laptop computers and briefcases left behind.

The second most significant increase in larcenies from motor vehicles was reported in the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood. This increase is due, at least in part, to a pattern traditionally isolated in the Area 4 neighborhood. The majority of the Area 4 breaks occurred in the Bishop Allen Drive area in close proximity to Norfolk, Columbia, and Main Streets. Specifically, incidents were reported on weeknights between 7:00 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. This year, this pattern has extended into the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood, specifically visible between 250-350 Harvard Street. The manifestation of this pattern in the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood occurred primarily during the first three months of the year, however, a few reports were also reported this fall.

Cambridgeport only recorded a slight increase in incidents, but moved into the second spot for total number of incidents reported. One pattern in this

neighborhood that deserves to be highlighted is the on-going larcenies from motor vehicles at the Radisson parking garage (777 Memorial Drive). Thirteen incidents were reported at this address this year. The majority of the incidents took place on the weekends between 10:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m.

Many other neighborhoods, such as the East Cambridge, Area 4, West Cambridge, and Cambridge Highlands neighborhoods experienced a significant decrease in the number of larcenies from motor vehicles reported this year.



The Cambridge Police Department arrested 17 people (one person twice)—all men—for larcenies from motor vehicles in 2001. Ages ranged from 16 to 38. Two of the arrestees were juveniles.

One of the people arrested was homeless. 12 arrestees were from Cambridge (five from North Cambridge, two from Cambridgeport, and one each from Area 4, Peabody, Riverside, and the Inman/Harrington neighborhoods), two from Somerville, and one each from East Boston, South Boston, and Brockton.

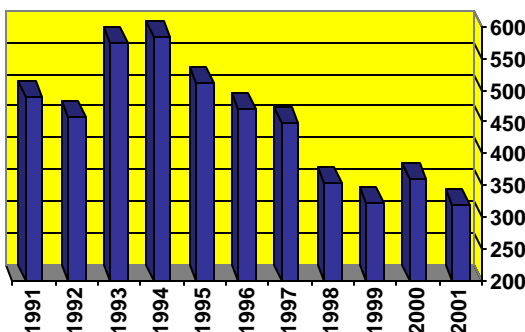
Top Larceny from Motor Vehicle Hot Spots

- Radisson Hotel Garage – 777 Memorial Drive (Cambridgeport): 13 incidents
- 362/364 Rindge Avenue parking lot (North Cambridge): 12 incidents
- Essex Street & Bishop Allen Drive (Area 4): 10 incidents
- 149 Alewife Brook Parkway parking lot (North Cambridge): 7 incidents
- CambridgeSide Galleria Garage (East Cambridge): 6 incidents
- Bishop Allen Drive & Norfolk Street (Area 4): 6 incidents
- 872 Massachusetts Avenue (Riverside): 5 incidents

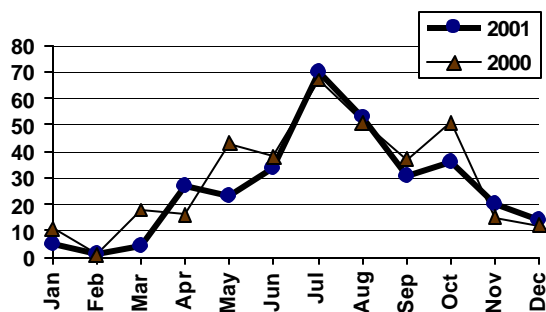
Larcenies of Bicycles

Larcenies of bicycles are again on the decline in 2001. Between 1989 and 1994, bicycle theft exhibited a sharp ascent, soaring from an average of 270 per year in the 1980s to 575 in 1993. Since 1994, this crime has been steadily declining with the exception of last year. The Cambridge Police Department's bicycle theft statistics do not include thefts reported on MIT or Harvard University property. These additional thefts could add several hundred to the total.

Bicycle Larceny, 1991-2001



The monthly breakdown of larcenies of bicycles, shown below, closely mirrors the breakdown of last year's numbers. July recorded the sharpest increase in the crime during both years. This crime has again taken on a bell-shaped curve with incidents increasing towards the summer months, peaking, and then sharply decreasing as we head towards winter. The unseasonable weather we have experienced so far this year could conceivably lead to an increase in incidents during the first quarter of 2002.



The following represent the top four locations for larcenies of bicycles:

1. The Porter Square T-station (7 incidents)
2. The Charles Hotel – 1 Bennett Street (5 incidents)

3. Technology Square (5 incidents)

4. The Porter Exchange – 1815 Mass. Ave. (4 incidents).

Geographic Breakdown of Bicycle Theft

Neighborhood	2000	2001	Change
East Cambridge	24	17	-29%
MIT	15	11	-27%
Inman/Harrington	26	13	-50%
Area 4	34	27	-21%
Cambridgeport	43	48	+12%
Mid-Cambridge	53	43	-19%
Riverside	42	29	-31%
Agassiz	18	17	-6%
Peabody	17	22	+29%
West Cambridge	35	41	+17%
North Cambridge	40	36	-10%
Cambridge Highlands	2	9	+350%
Strawberry Hill	11	5	-56%

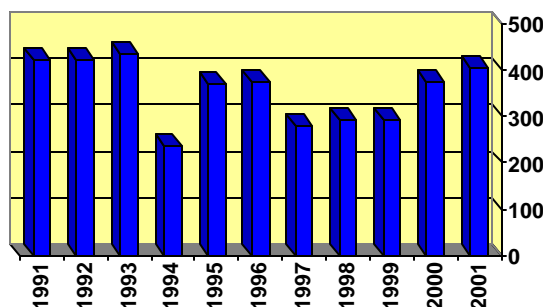
The following are trends and patterns reported in 2001:

- The Cambridge Highlands neighborhood increased the most this year. Most of these thefts were of bicycles parked in the Fresh Pond shopping mall. Half of the bikes were locked, half were unlocked.
- In the mid-90s, over half of bicycles stolen were taken from the street. Most involved bikes either locked or left leaning against meters, signs, and bike racks. As we headed towards the year 2000, the trend reversed and most bikes were taken from residential areas such as back yards, front porches, apartment building basements, and garages. What made this most unnerving was that these represented areas where people thought their bikes would be safe. Now in 2001, this crime has come full circle, reporting 65% of bikes stolen from the street and 35% stole from residential areas.
- 66% of the bicycle thefts reported occurred between May and September. This percentage is consistent with the bell-shaped curve of incidents.
- Despite the fact that larcenies of bicycles have moved away from protected residential areas, larcenies reported in Central, Harvard, and Porter Squares remains low. In the early to mid-1990s, Harvard Square had the highest concentration in the city, with 70-100 thefts over any given summer. This year the highest concentration was in Central Square, which reported 64 incidents.

Larcenies from the Person

Larceny from the Person describes pocket-picking or any theft that occurs within the victim's area of control. The thefts are non-confrontational, and usually the victim is not aware of the theft until after it has occurred. If any confrontation between offender and victim takes place, the crime is recorded as a robbery.

Larceny from the Person, 1991-2001



Three recurring scenarios dominate larcenies from persons:

1. **Larcenies of Diners' Property** (149). In the typical occurrence of this crime, a female diner places her purse under her chair, beside her chair, or slung over the back of her chair. During the meal, someone creeps up from behind and lifts the wallet from the purse, or takes the purse entirely. Men are sometimes victimized, with wallets taken from coats hung over the backs of chairs. Over half of this type of larceny occurred in Harvard Square restaurants. Usually, the crime happens at dinnertime, between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., but diners at coffee shops are often victimized during the lunch hour. Usually, Harvard Square experiences four to six solid patterns a year that feature these characteristics. Central Square occasionally reports patterns of this crime, and there are a few scattered incidents at the Food Court at the CambridgeSide Galleria.
2. **Pocketpicking** (40). While a victim walks through a public place, a crafty pickpocket ("dipper") stealthily reaches into the victim's coat, purse, or backpack and removes valuables—with wallets and cellular telephones the most common targets. Harvard Square and Central Square report the highest pocketpicking numbers, with the concentration between noon and 4:00 p.m.
3. **Distracted Shoppers** (86). A shopper puts a bag of merchandise or a purse by his or her feet, while browsing through a store. Moments later, it is gone. Often, the theft occurs from a

shopping cart in a grocery store. The highest concentrations are at the CambridgeSide Galleria, Central Square, and Harvard Square.

A fourth categorization—theft from moviegoers—reported 21 incidents in 2001. Eight of them were from patrons at the Harvard Square Cinema and six of them were from patrons at the Fresh Pond Mall cinema.

Geographic Breakdown of Larcenies from Persons

Business District	2000	2001	Change
Galleria/East Camb.	52	54	+4%
Kendall Square/MIT	24	19	-21%
Inman Square	11	26	+136%
Central Square	67	77	+15%
Camb.port/Riverside	5	11	+120%
Bay Square/Broadway	14	10	-29%
Harvard Square	137	124	-9%
1500-1900 Mass. Ave.	9	10	+11%
Porter Square	24	28	+17%
Alewife/West Camb.	26	48	+85%
Unknown	6	0	-100%

The geographic breakdown shows that the Harvard Square, Central Square, and Galleria districts overwhelmingly dominate this crime. Harvard Square reports nearly double the number of Central Square—most of them larcenies of diners' property.

Shoplifting

Shoplifting incidents increased by 24% this year. 37% of all shoplifting incidents occur at the CambridgeSide Galleria. Harvard Square makes up the majority of the remainder.

Shoplifters usually fall into one of five categories:

1. **Juvenile Shoplifters** who steal on a dare, to impress their peers, to get an "adrenaline rush," or to compensate for lack of money.
2. **Impulse Shoplifters** who seize a sudden chance, such as an unattended dressing room or a blind aisle. Sometimes, the "impulse" is a long line or sudden lack of money.
3. **Alcoholics, vagrants, and drug addicts**, who steal erratically and clumsily. When caught, this type of shoplifter is more likely than others to get violent (see "Shop Owner/Patron" assaults in the Assault section).
4. **Kleptomaniacs** who steal to satisfy a psychological need.

5. **Professionals**, who steal expensive items and resell them to fences or “flea markets.”

Since shoplifting incidents are most often reported only when an arrest is made, an increase in shoplifting may be viewed positively: more thieves are being caught. On the other hand, since the vast majority of shoplifting incidents are unseen and go unknown until the store checks its inventory, underreporting of shoplifting is a serious problem. The actual shoplifting number may be four to seven times the statistic given in this report.

Geographic Breakdown of Shoplifting

Business District	2000	2001	% Change
Galleria/East Camb.	136	179	+32%
Kendall Square/MIT	4	2	-50%
Inman Square	11	6	-45%
Central Square	45	62	+38%
Camb.port/Riverside	18	30	+67%
Bay Square/Broadway	5	4	-20%
Harvard Square	81	96	+19%
1500–1900 Mass. Ave.	12	9	-25%
Porter Square	24	27	+13%
Alewife/West Camb.	37	48	+30%

Again, the business districts of the Galleria, Harvard Square, and Central Square dominate the shoplifting totals.

Police made 277 arrests for shoplifting in 2001—153 males and 124 females. Ages ranged from 12 to 61. 110 of those arrested were juveniles. 97 arrested shoplifters were from Boston, 51 from Cambridge, and 16 from Somerville. 13 were homeless. The remaining arrestees were from neighboring cities. The CambridgeSide Galleria swarms with juveniles from Boston, and most of those arrested for shoplifting at the Galleria fit this profile.

Larceny from Residences

Larcenies from Residences are non-burglary thefts from apartments, hallways, garages, and yards. “Non-burglary” means that no force or trespass was involved in the theft: people who have the right to be on the property commit the thefts. They include thefts committed by guests, roommates, family members, workers, and home health care providers. They also include thefts committed from common areas of apartment buildings, and thefts committed from property surrounding a house, such as the front yard, walkway, or tool shed. Since larcenies from residences are usually committed by someone who knows the victim, pattern identification and intervention by the police department is difficult. This crime decreased nineteen percent from 2000.

The most common larceny from residence scenarios are:

- Thefts committed by visitors or guests to a residence: 17%
- Thefts from a yard, porch, or other area surrounding a residence: 18%. Some common items targeted are lawn & garden equipment, flowers and fauna, decorations, and children’s toys.
- Thefts committed by a family member, spouse, or romantic partner (i.e., “domestic thefts”): 17%
- Thefts committed by someone working in the apartment, such as a painter, plumber, contractor, or maintenance man: 13%
- Thefts from a common hallway, foyer, or storage area of an apartment building: 22%
- Thefts of mail or packages delivered by a parcel service: 9%
- Thefts committed through some unknown means: 4%

Patterns of larcenies from residences are extremely rare; they are often committed by neighbors or other people living in the victim’s apartment building.

Geographic Breakdown of Larcenies from Residences

Neighborhood	2000	2001	Change
East Cambridge	19	18	-5%
MIT	1	0	<i>Inc.</i>
Inman/Harrington	16	12	-25%
Area 4	33	24	-27%
Cambridgeport	35	25	-29%
Mid-Cambridge	31	22	-29%
Riverside	14	9	-36%
Agassiz	5	9	+80%
Peabody	27	16	-41%
West Cambridge	14	15	+7%
North Cambridge	14	19	+36%
Cambridge Highlands	2	2	N.C.
Strawberry Hill	4	4	N.C.

Larceny of Services

This crime includes taxicab fare evasion, “dining and ditching,” “gassing and going,” and other failures to pay for services already rendered.

2001 occurrences broke down as follows:

- 49% theft of gasoline

- 24% rode in a taxi without paying.
- 14% “dining & ditching” (i.e., running out of a restaurant without paying for the check)
- 8% drove out of a parking garage without paying.
- 5% miscellaneous, including a woman who spent the day at the spa and didn’t pay.

Larcenies of License Plates

A crime related to larcenies from motor vehicles is the self-explanatory larcenies of license plates, which decreased 27 percent between 2000 and 2001. Stolen plates are often used to replace license plates on stolen automobiles of the same make and model, or to give a plate to an unregistered motor vehicle. Since the theft of a license plate is often unnoticed and unreported for several weeks, the thief’s stolen or unregistered car is somewhat protected from detection during that time.

However, new computer technologies that allow patrol officers to quickly check the status of a license plate (and what car it belongs to) are making this crime risky for thieves, thus lowering the rate.

Geographic Breakdown of
License Plate Larcenies

Neighborhood	2000	2001	Change
East Cambridge	11	8	-27%
MIT	5	3	-40%
Inman/Harrington	13	12	-8%
Area 4	22	14	-36%
Cambridgeport	20	14	-30%
Mid-Cambridge	7	8	+14%
Riverside	6	8	+33%
Agassiz	6	1	-83%
Peabody	11	5	-55%
West Cambridge	7	4	-43%
North Cambridge	13	10	-23%
Cambridge Highlands	1	12	+1100%
Strawberry Hill	1	1	N.C.
Unknown	14	0	<i>Inc.</i>

It should be noted that many plates reported stolen simply fell off the vehicle, but when in doubt, the loss is recorded as a larceny.

2001 Larceny Tower

